Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of continuously desalinating water by reverse osmosis, comprising:~~in particular desalinating sea water, wherein~~

- introducing salt water ~~(10) is introduced~~ under a first pressure ~~(p1)~~ by means of a delivery pump ~~(1)~~ into a pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ having a piston/cylinder device,

- introducing salt water ~~(11) is continuously introduced~~ from the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ at a second increased pressure ~~(p2)~~ into a membrane module ~~(3)~~ and separated therein by means of a membrane ~~(6)~~ into desalinated water ~~(12)~~ and concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~, and

- discharging the concentrated salt water ~~(13) discharged~~ from the membrane module ~~(3) is continuously introduced~~ and introducing it under approximately the second pressure ~~(p2)~~ into the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ and ~~used there~~ for acting with approximately the second pressure ~~(p2)~~ on the salt water ~~(10)~~ introduced into the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ and for introducing the salt water ~~(11)~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~, and

- introducing a continuous flow of the salt water ~~(11) introduced~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~ that is maintained over the surface of the membrane ~~(6)~~ by means of salt water discharged from a reservoir ~~(15; 403, 20)~~,

~~characterised in that~~ the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20) has~~ having a piston reservoir ~~(403)~~ with a piston ~~(303)~~, wherein at the piston front side it has an inlet chamber ~~(203)~~ connected to the salt water outlet of the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~

and the salt water inlet of the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and at the piston rear side it has an outlet chamber ~~(103)~~ connected to the outlet of the concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~ of the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and a pressure chamber ~~(503)~~ connected to a pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~, and that the surface area ratios of the piston rear side and the pressure of the pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~ are so set that at predetermined moments in time a pressure is produced in the inlet chamber ~~(203)~~, which is greater than the second pressure ~~(p2)~~ of the salt water ~~(11)~~ discharged from the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 characterised in that the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ has two piston/cylinder devices ~~(401, 402)~~ which operate in opposite phase relationship and which each have a respective piston ~~(301, 302)~~, and that the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ passes water from the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~ upon a change in the direction of movement of the pistons ~~(301, 302)~~.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ characterised in that the pressure for discharging the water from the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ is produced by a combination of the approximately second pressure ~~(p2)~~ of the concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~ discharged from the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and an assisting pressure from a pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for continuously desalinating water by reverse osmosis, ~~in particular for desalinating sea water,~~ comprising:

- a delivery pump ~~(1)~~ for introducing salt water ~~(10)~~ under a first pressure ~~(p1)~~ into a pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~,

- a membrane module ~~(3)~~ for separating introduced salt water ~~(11)~~ into desalinated water ~~(12)~~ and concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~,

- a pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ having a piston/cylinder device for continuously feeding the salt water ~~(11)~~ under a second increased pressure ~~(p2)~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and for discharging the concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~, and

- a reservoir ~~(15; 403, 20)~~ for maintaining a continuous flow of the salt water ~~(11)~~ introduced into the membrane module ~~(3)~~ over the surface of the membrane ~~(6)~~ by the discharge of water from the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~,

~~characterised in that~~ the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20) has~~ having a piston reservoir ~~(403)~~ with a piston ~~(303)~~, wherein at the piston front side it has an inlet chamber ~~(203)~~ connected to the salt water outlet of the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ and the salt water inlet of the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and at the piston rear side it has an outlet chamber ~~(103)~~ connected to the outlet of the concentrated salt water ~~(13)~~ of the membrane module ~~(3)~~ and a pressure chamber ~~(503)~~ connected to a pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~, and that the surface area ratios of the piston rear side and the pressure of the pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~ are so set that at predetermined moments in time a pressure is produced in the inlet chamber ~~(203)~~, which is greater than the second pressure ~~(p2)~~ of the salt water ~~(11)~~ discharged from the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4 characterised in that the pressure compensating device ~~(2)~~ has two piston/cylinder devices ~~(401, 402)~~ operating in opposite phase relationship and each having a respective piston ~~(301, 302)~~ and that the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ passes water out of the reservoir ~~(15; 403; 20)~~ into the membrane module ~~(3)~~ upon a change in the direction of movement of the pistons ~~(301, 302)~~.

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4 ~~or claim 5~~ characterised in that the piston ~~(303)~~ is of such a configuration that the pressure obtaining

in the pressure chamber ~~(503)~~ can act on approximately a quarter of the area of the piston rear side and the pressure obtaining in the outlet chamber ~~(103)~~ can act approximately on three quarters of the area of the piston rear side.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4~~, claim 5 or claim 6~~ characterised in that the pressure reservoir ~~(20)~~ has a pressure which is at least double the second pressure ~~(p2)~~.